

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5513

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 1343

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SUB: CABINET CHANGES AND NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

REF: (A) 75 TEHRAN 10768, (B) 74 TEHRAN A-174

BEGIN SUMMARY. JUST AS RUMORS OF IMPENDING CABINET CHANGES WERE BEGINNING TO FADEHN PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA ANNOUNCED TWO SHIFTS OF MINISTERS AND ONE REORGANIZATION ON FEB 7. MINCOMMERCE FEREIDOUN MAHDAVI IS NOW MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF RASTAKHIZ PARY (RPPI) AFFAIRS, AND HIS PLACE AT COMMERCE WILL BE FILLED BY MANOUCHEHR TASLIMI, FORMERLY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION ORGANIZATION (IDRO). MINISTER OF HEALTH AMOUSHIRAVAN POUYAN WAS DROPPED FROM CABINET AND MINISTRY OF HEALTH WAS COMBINED WITH EXISTING MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE. DR. SHOJAEDDIN SHAIKHOESLAMIZADEH, PRESENT MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE, HEADS THE NEW COMBINED MINISTRY BUT WILL ADD TITLE OF ACTING MINISTER OF HEALTH UNTIL PARLIAMENT APPROVES AMALGAMATION. ACCORDING TO PRIMIN, CHANGE AT COMMERCE WAS DESIGNED TO FREE MAHDAVI FOR RPPI WORK, AND AMALGAMATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND HEALTH MINISTRIES WAS AIMED AT RATIONALIZING ADMINISTRATION OF GOI HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS.

ALSO ON FEB 7, INTERIOR MINISTER AMOUZEGAR ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT OF FOUR NEW GOVERNORS-GENERAL. ASSADOLLAH NASR-ISFAHANI GOES TO FARS PROVINCE AND MOHAMMAD TABATABAI REPLACES HIM AS GOVERNOR-CONFIDENTIAL

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GENERAL OF KERMAN PROVINCE. ATAOLLAH MOATADEL, WHO BECOMES

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF GILAN PROVINCE, IS REPLACED AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CHAHAR MAHAL BAKHTIARI BY ALI ASGHAR TAHERI. BIO DATA AND COMMENT FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

1. AVAILABLE BIO DATA ON NEW MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS FOLLOWS:

A. MANUCHEHR TASLIMI, MINISTER OF COMMERCE. BORN JULY 23, 1923 IN TEHRAN. MS IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING FROM TEHRAN UNIVERSITY, 1946; STUDIED AT CASE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, 1948, NO DEGREE; MS IN HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, 1952; PHD IN HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE, LONDON, 1954. BEGAN CAREER AS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION IN POINT IV PROGRAM IN RASHT, THEN HELD SEVERAL TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE JOBS. HE BECAME UNDERSECRETARY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ADVISOR TO MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, THEN UNDERSECRETARY IN MINISTRY OF INFORMATION BEFORE HIS APPOINTMENT AS CHANCELLOR AT TABRIZ UNIVERSITY IN LATE '60'S. NAMED MANAGING DIRECTOR OF IDRO IN JUNE 1972.

TASLIMI IS SOFT-SPOKEN, HAS WRY SENSE OF HUMOR, AND IS HIGHLY REGARDED BY MOST IRANIANS. HE HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT AND USEFUL EMBASSY CONTACT, PARTICULARLY REGARDING US-IRAN JOINT COMMISSION ACTIVITIES. KNOWN AS A CAPABLE ADMINISTRATOR, TASLIMI WAS A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF HUSHANG ANSARY DURING HIS SHORT TOUR AS ADVISER ON INDUSTRIAL STANDARDS TO MINISTRY OF ECONOMY BETWEEN HIS UNDERSECRETARYSHIPS. THOUGH BRIEFLY A TUDEH (COMMUNIST) PARTY MEMBER IN 1949 AS A STUDENT, HE HAS BEEN FULLY CLEARED BY THE GOI FOR MANY YEARS. HE IS EXPECTED TO DO A FIRST CLASS JOB AS MINISTER. ONLY RESERVATION STEMS FROM HIS LACK OF ACTUAL BUSINESS EXPERIENCE. FORMER MINCOMMERCE MAHDAVI, WHO TOOK STRONG AND KNOWLEDGABLE PERSONAL INTEREST IN PRICE CONTROL CAMPAIGN RUN BY THAT MINISTRY, CONFIDED TO AMBASSADOR THAT TASLIMI WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO EXERCISE SAME PERSONAL INFLUENCE AND CONTROL IN THAT AREA BECAUSE HE LACKS BUSINESS EXPERIENCE.

TASLIMI IS A SHIA MOSLEM AND IS MARRIED TO AN ENGLISH-WOMAN; THEIR THREE SONS ARE 18, 14, AND 9.

B. FEREIDOUN MAHDAVI. REFS A AND B PROVIDE RECENT BIO DATA. MAHDAVI WILL NOW BE DEVOTING HIS CONSIDERABLE ENERGIES AND TALENTS
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TO MAKING RPPI A VIABLE AND EFFECTIVE FACTOR IN IRANIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. CONSENSUS IS THAT HIS LOSS OF THE COMMERCE PORTFOLIO IS NOT A DEMOTION BUT RATHER RECOGNITION THAT RPPI IS NOW A FULL-TIME JOB. SOME OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, THINK MAHDAVI HAS LOST AN ORGANIZATIONAL BASE IN COMMERCE MINISTRY WHICH RPPI DOES NOT YET PROVIDE.

C. DR. SHOJAEDDIN SHAIKHOESLAMIZADEH, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND

SOCIAL WELFARE. BORN IN 1932 IN TABRIZ, HE RECEIVED HIS MEDICAL TRAINING IN U.S. AND RETURNED TO IRAN TO HEAD ORTHOPEDICS DEPARTMENT AT PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY IN SHIRAZ. IN 1968 "DR. SHAIK," AS HE IS KNOWN IN IRAN, BECAME MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL IRANIAN SOCIETY FOR REHABILITATION OF DISABLED WHILE CONTINUING TO PRACTICE ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY (HE OPERATED SUCCESSFULLY ON U.S. CHARGE MARTIN HERZ IN LATE 1960S). KNOWN AS AN ENERGETIC ADMINISTRATOR, DR. SHAIK IS CONFIDENT TO POINT OUT COCKINESS AND CLAIMS HE IS RENOWNED FOR ABILITY TO HANG ON TO DIFFICULT PROBLEM UNTIL IT IS SOLVED. AS PRIVATE DOCTOR, HE AND FOUR OTHER DOCTORS PREPARED A 1971 REPORT TO GOI WHICH RECOMMENDED CREATION OF A SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY TO SUPERVISE ALL WELFARE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING HEALTH. HE WAS NAMED MINISTER WHEN NEW UNIT WAS CREATED (WITHOUT HEALTH PORTFOLIO) IN APRIL 1974. SHAIKHOESLAMIZADEH AGGRESSIVELY RECRUITED GOOD OFFICIALS TO STAFF NEW MINISTRY, AND SUCCEEDED IN INDUCING SEVERAL EXPERIENCED IRANIANS TO RETURN FROM ABROAD TO SERVE AS HIS ASSISTANTS. HE IS MARRIED TO AN IRANIAN WOMAN FROM TEHRAN. BOTH SPEAK FLUENT ENGLISH.

2. NEW GOVERNORS GENERAL:

A. ENGINEER ATAOLLAH MOATADEL, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF GILAN PROVINCE. BORN 1933 AT QAZVIN. DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE FROM TEHRAN UNIVERSITY, MS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT FROM CORNELL. HE WORKED IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FROM 1958-1966, AND HEADED GORGAN AND DASHT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WHICH

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 1343

WERE JOINT GOI-FORD FOUNDATION EFFORTS. FROM 1966-1969 HE WAS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF STUDIES AND PLANNING FOR RURAL AND URBAN AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. FROM 1969 UNTIL HIS APPOINTMENT AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CHAHAR MAHAL BAKHTIARI PROVINCE, MOATADEL WAS PROFESSOR OF RURAL SETTLEMENT PLANNING AT TEHRAN UNIVERSITY, RESEARCH FELLOW AT INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH, AND FOR SHORT PERIOD WAS DIRECTOR OF VILLAGE RENOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PLAN AND BUDGET ORGANIZATION. HE HAS VISITED U.S., PAKISTAN, THAILAND, AND INDIA AND HAS PUBLISHED SEVERAL BOOKS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. HE MARRIED IN 1971,. HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH.

B. ALI-ASGHAR TAHERI, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CHAHAR MAHAL BAKHTIARI PROVINCE. BORN 1921 IN TEHRAN. LAW DEGREE FROM TEHRAN UNIVERSITY. TAHERI WAS GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF GILAN FROM 1969-1976, AND HAS RECENTLY DOUBLED AS SPECIAL COUNSELOR TO MININTERIOR AMOUZEGAR. HE PREVIOUS CAREER WAS SPENT IN INTERIOR MINISTRY WHERE HE HELD FOLLOWING POSTS: PARLIAMENTARY UNDERSECRETARY, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ADMINISTRATION, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INSPECTION, AND GENERAL MANAGER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS. HE ALSO SERVED BRIEFLY AS GOVERNOR OF BOTH ABADAN AND LURISTAN. AN EX-MEMBER OF THE IRAN NOVIN PARTY, TAHERI HAS TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY IN EUROPE AND SPEAKS GOOD FRENCH BUT VIRTUALLY NO ENGLISH.
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C. MOHAMMAD TABATABAI, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF KERMAN PROVINCE. BORN IN 1926, HE HAS A DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE. TABATABAI WAS MAYOR OF HAMADAN AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF IRAN'S MUNICIPALITY ORGANIZATION. PRIOR TO HIS PRESENT APPOINTMENT HE WAS DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR PERSONNEL AND AN INSPECTOR IN MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

D. ASADOLLAH NASR-ISFAHANI, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF FARS PROVINCE. BORN IN 1918, HE HAS DOCTORATE IN ECONOMICS. NASR-ISFAHANI'S PREVIOUS POST WAS GOVERNOR GENERAL OF KERMAN PROVINCE. HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS THE IRANIAN MEMBER OF THE U.N. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD.

3. COMMENT: CABINET CHANGES JUST ANNOUNCED HAVE BEEN SUBJECT OF RUMORS MAKING ROUNDS SINCE LAST SEPTEMBER. AS RASTAKHIZ PARTY ACTIVITY HAS GAINED MOMENTUM, IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT MAHDAVI OR SOMEONE ELSE

WOULD HAVE TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO RPPI AFFAIRS, AND SHAH AND HOVEYDA HAVE NOW SETTLED ON MAHDAVI. IN HIS FIRST STATEMENT AS NEW MINCOMMERCE, TASLIMI PROMISED CONTINUATION OF MAHDAVI POLICY--VIGOROUS PROSECUTION OF ANIT-INFLATION CAMPCIGN AND STRONG EFFORT TO ESTABLISH NEW PRICE SYSTEM.

4. ACCORDING TO FORMER MINSOCIAL AFFAIRS OFFICIAL, DECISION TO COMBINE HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTRIES WAS TAKEN NOW TO FACILITATE PLANNING OF OMNIBUS SOCIAL WELFARE/HEALTH PROGRAM TO CARRY OUT 16TH AND 17TH PRINCIPLES OF SHAH-PEOPLE REVOLUTION (FREE MATERNAL AND CHILD CARE AND BROAD SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE). AMALGAMATION WAS FIRST MENTIONED IN 1971 REPORT RECOMMENDING CREATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY AND WAS RECENTLY URGED BY DAVID LILIENTHAL/JOHN MACY ADVISORY GROUP TO GOI. CHOICE OF ENERGETIC SHAIKHOLESLAMIZADEH TO HEAD NEW MINISTRY AND RETIREMENT OF SOMEWHAT PEDESTRIAN AND LACKLUSTER POUYAN TO PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTICE APPEARS TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND LOGICAL MOVE. IN HIS FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE NEW POSITION, DR. SHAIK SAID RAPID DECENTRALIZATION OF HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES TO PROVINCES WOULD BE PRIORITY TASKS FOR COMBINED MINISTRY AND WOULD BEGIN RIGHT AWAY.
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5. CHANGES OF GOVERNORS-GENERAL WERE EXPECTED. MORE PROBABLY ARE IN OFFING DURING NOW RUZ (MARCH 21) PERIOD, WHICH HAS BECOME TRADITIONAL TIME FOR GOVERNMENTAL SHIFTS. ONLY SURPRISE IS LACK OF ANNOUNCED ONWARD ASSIGNMENT FOR FARS PROVINCE EX-GOVERNOR-GENERAL MANOUCHEHR PIRUZ, WHO IS CONSIDERED AN OUTSTANDING SENIOR GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND PROBABLY IS SLATED FOR GOOD POST, PERHAPS IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, DURING SUBSEQUENT SHUFFLE.

6. AFTER ABOVE DRAFTED, EMBASSY LARNED THAT AN UNDER-SECRETARY AND A MANAGING DIRECTOR AT MINCOMMERCE HAVE BEEN FIRED FOR MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS. THEY ARE HOSSEIN ALIZADEH, UNDERSECRETARY AND CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR GRAINS, SUGAR AND TEA; AND MOHAMMED ALI SEYRAFI, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF FOREIGN TRANSACTIONS COMPANY. NEWS OF THIS LATEST EXPOSURE OF CORRUPTION HAS DIMINISHED MAHDAVI'S STATURE SOMESHAT AND MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO HIS LOSS OF COMMERCE PORTFOLIO.
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